

ELECTED OFFICIALS

DeSaulnier

tackles healthcare reform

■ Local Assemblyman appointed to new law reform group

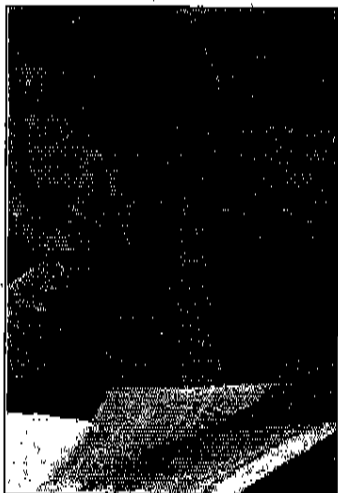
Gazette Staff

Local Assemblyman Mark DeSaulnier (D-Martinez) announced his appointment on Tuesday to the Assembly Healthcare Reform Working Group, convened by Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez.

The Healthcare Reform Group will provide direction on comprehensive healthcare reform and work closely with the Governor and the State Senate to achieve consensus on this issue.

"As a small business owner and former county supervisor, I will make sure that reform acknowledges the need for stability in costs for employers and

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MARK DESAULNIER

Appointed to healthcare reform group.

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Finally provides widespread access to quality, affordable healthcare. In this great state of ours, it is simply a matter of dignity for all people to be cared for and healthy," said DeSaulnier.

Mark will bring unique leadership to the Working Group. His experience while on the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors with the real challenges of healthcare policy have molded

his no-nonsense, practical approach to the subject. He will be able to move policy in the right direction," commented Jeff Smith, former Contra Costa Supervisor and current executive director of Contra Costa Regional Medical Center.

The working group will tackle adjustments to Assembly Bill 8, passed by the Legislature and awaiting the signature of the Governor. The bill would expand health insurance to more than two-thirds of Californians now uninsured. AB 8 would also

insure all children and significantly improve existing cost control mechanisms. Further, AB 8 would require most employers to offer health insurance to their employees or contribute to a collective state pool for the uninsured.

"We've seen some unfortunate defeats in the fight for universal healthcare with the overturn of Senate Bill 2 in 2004 and the veto of Senate Bill 840 in 2006 and the likely veto of SB 840 this year that make it clear we will need incremental reform.

Although I wish SB 840 would be signed, AB 8 is a monumental step toward universal healthcare. I look forward to hashing out the details and improving the day-to-day lives of Californians," finished DeSaulnier.

The group also includes Majority Leader Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) and Assembly Members Mary Hayashi (D-Hayward), Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate), Mervyn Dymally (D-Los Angeles), Patty Berg (D-Bureka), and Ed Hernandez (D-Baldwin Park).